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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, AF/E,
INR LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/27/2018

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SUBJECT: REPORTED EXECUTION OF ERITREAN SOLDIERS AS "AN
EXAMPLE"

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C/NF) A local employee (LES) told RSO that ten Eritrean soldiers were summarily executed after a group of soldiers complained about the lack of food. According to the LES, the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) were conducting field exercises last week in the village of Tukul, located approximately 25 miles southeast of Asmara. During the training, a group of soldiers purportedly complained to their officers about conducting field operations while they were hungry, as the EDF had not provided them adequate food. The Eritrean officers reportedly chastised the soldiers for being "unpatriotic" and, later that day, randomly grabbed ten soldiers from this particular unit. The ten soldiers were then summarily shot as "an example" to maintain discipline and as an example to others who might question orders.

¶2. (C/NF) The LES stated that he had heard this information directly from a soldier who had witnessed this incident and had defected from his unit later that same day, escaping to Asmara. This soldier had been employed as a Local Guard Force member at the U.S. Embassy until 2000, when he was picked up in a military roundup and forced into national service. Since that time, the former employee has been serving in the EDF. Post has been unable to corroborate this information, however, we continue to receive reports of mass defections from Eritrean military units and reports of low morale due to inadequate food, water, or shelter.
MCMULLEN